

## **Identity Threats of the Islamic Revolution from the Perspective of the Leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran**

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**Sayyed Ali Latifi\***

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### **Abstract**

The occurrence of the Islamic Revolution in the "Age of Information" and the development of rational relations based on materialism have surprised the world due to its soft power. Hence, in this research, we sought to clarify "what identity threats may expose the true structure of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the risk of infiltration and influence of any foreign culture or their domination"?

In response to this question, we must say that the foundations of soft power in the Islamic Republic of Iran are based on components such as Shiite Islamism, Iranian nationalism, independence, fighting with the global arrogance, and revolutionism, which form the power structure in the Islamic Republic of Iran and have associated with many successes both inside and outside the country. However, in some cases, due to the failure of building the macro-policies based on those components and the one-dimensional and non-systematic attitude toward these components, which are defined around the central axis of Shi'a Islamism, they turn into anti-agent and threatening factors. In this research, we tried to identify and examine such potential and actual threats based on the software resources adapted from the theoretical framework relying on the theory of threat in the field of security using a descriptive-analytical method according to views and ideas of the Majesty Imam Khomeini (PBUH) and the Supreme Leader as the leaders of the Islamic Republic.

### **Keywords**

Islamic Revolution of Iran, Soft power, Hard power, Soft threat, Shiite Islamism, Majesty Imam Khomeini, Supreme Leader.

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\* PhD. Student of Political Thought at Institute for Humanities and Cultural Studies  
Alavi.1444@gmail.com

## **Introduction**

During the times, when social thinkers and philosophers were talking about promising news of the beginning of a new era called “Information Age” and the development of rational relationships based on materialism in the developed world, suddenly, a glorious revolution took place in Iran following a series of political, social, and cultural developments, which surprised the world due to relying on the soft power. Since the victory of this great revolutionary movement, the religious and spiritual power achieved a determinant role in the political equations and global decision-makings and religious, spiritual, and cultural values came to gain a major influencing on the international relations as well as global and regional decisions.

In fact, the Islamic Revolution of Iran can be considered as the manifestation of the realization of soft power, implying the ability to influence the behavior of others without threatening or paying tangible costs. In fact, soft power is the product and outcome of making positive image and gaining credibility in the public opinion of the world, which indirectly affects the interests or behaviors of other countries by using tools such as culture, brilliant background and history, and human ideals or values. Therefore, the soft power is a social phenomenon associated with environmental factors, which, as compared with other foreign policy instruments, is highly influenced by the components of national identity (Harsij and Tuyserkani, 2010: 151). The use of soft power in order to demonstrate the legitimacy of the policies of the Islamic Revolution presented a new face of power alongside hard power in such a way that the soft power studies gradually became increasingly important after the victory of the Islamic Revolution and the end of the Cold War. Since the difference between the structure of the Islamic Republic and other systems of the world was based on its difference in relying on the soft resources of power, thus, the type of threats would be proportionally of the soft type as well.

Hence, in this research, we sought to clarify “what identity threats may expose the true structure of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the risk of infiltration and influence of any foreign culture or their domination?”

In response to this question, we must say that the foundations of soft power in the Islamic Republic of Iran are based on components such as Shiite Islamism, Iranian nationalism, independence, fighting with the global arrogance, and revolutionism, which form the power structure in the Islamic Republic of Iran and have associated with many successes both inside and outside the country. However, in some cases, due to the failure of building the macro-policies based on those components and the one-dimensional and non-systematic attitude toward these components, which are defined around

the central axis of Shi'a Islamism, they turn into anti-agent and threatening factors. In this research, we tried to identify and examine such potential and actual threats based on the software resources adapted from the theoretical framework relying on the theory of threat in the field of security using a descriptive-analytical method according to views and ideas of the Majesty Imam Khomeini (PBUH) and the Supreme Leader as the leaders of the Islamic Republic.

### **1. The theoretical and conceptual framework**

“Threat” is a sensitive word with certain semantic boundaries that ignoring them may lead to the development of its meaning, and consequently, the diminishing of the reality of threat; as Daniel Deudney has accurately suggested: “If it is supposed to account any bad thing as a threat to the security..., in that case, we will soon get an image of the threat, which will no longer have any useful application and meaning” (Eftekhari, 2006: 33). Since the government is not merely a set of specific individuals or titles but has a “functional” nature, thus, like a system, the government has material dignity and spiritual dignity. The material dignity of the state in the geographic territory includes race, language, and the elements like these objective things. However, the spiritual dignity of the system is in the constitution and in the “thought ruling” over it, what is interpreted to worldview. As a result, in such a structure, its threats can be defined in terms of type in two different contexts that we divided them into two “material” or “spiritual” categories (Larijani, 1990: 40). These categories, rooted in the type of the worldview of the actors, can be distinguished from each other as follows:

#### **1-1. One-dimensional (materialistic) worldview**

The obvious feature of such worldviews is the limitation of the period of human life to the worldly life, which is based on the originality of observation against the unseen world. The result of such an attitude is the centrality of worldly interests in decision makings (at different individual to collective and transnational levels). Therefore, the notion that “opportunities” and “threats” have a “materialistic” identity such as other concepts affecting the decision-making, is seen as an accepted and initial principle.

However, it must be noted that the materialistic attitudes seem to be merely negating the spiritual considerations related to the unseen world, and this does not include the soft considerations. This is due to the fact that emotional or affective psychological discussions still have material nature and objective effects in the human life from this perspective. Thus, one can

realize that the software dimensions, despite not having the same objectivity characteristic such as material dimensions, are considered in the security studies and measuring and managing these threats appears to be essential and valid (Rabeie, 2004).

As the worldviews also determine the methodologies, therefore, the result of the rule of the material framework in terms of methodology is the generation of customary theories that at best are able to understand the formal relationships between material phenomena.

### **1-2. Two-dimensional worldview**

In such worldviews, the existence of a world beyond the universe of observation is accepted, which has objective and mental functions. In other words, having faith in that world is influential in the insight and methodology of the player. Accordingly, the decisions and behaviors of actors do not merely relate to the world of matter and a reflection in that world is also conceived for them. From this perspective, one can imagine threats that threaten the spiritual interests and principles of the player. In this sense, they may have apparent material benefits to him, but as they damage the spiritual health of the player in the unseen world, they are rejected and evaluated as threat.

Thus, according to the above worldview, the threats can be divided into two categories based on their type:

**A.** Material threats that understandable benefits at the level of world of matter - including its hardware and software dimensions (psychology, emotion) form their source.

**B.** Spiritual threats that the interests and principles related to the spiritual life of the actor (which includes the world of matter and observes the unseen world that its beam has radiated to the universe of matter as well) form their source (Eftekhari, 2006: 223-225).

Since attaching a security label to all threats is not justified logically and some of the natural and other disasters, while being threatening, are not necessarily security, therefore, understanding the nature of the threat in the security atmosphere is more than anything else related to the consideration of the player of the concept of security. In this perspective, the threat as a “security phenomenon” refers to the behavior or a set of actions causing risks to the life of an actor and limiting the range of his options and choices. In today’s world, according to many analysts, the mere emphasis on hard power alone has not been and will not be associated with success. Accordingly, the strongest countries will not always remain the strongest unless they pay attention and value the true structure of power, which is the

software aspect of power. Henceforth, nowadays, the threats have led from military aspect to the soft threats, which have targeted the non-material elements of power such as norms, values, ideas, and ideologies rather than military structures and agents. For this reason, the most important element in the anatomy of the threat is the “one who is threatened”.

From a software perspective, the most important indicator for analyzing the threat at this level is the “subject of threat”. The subject of threat encompasses a part of the interests of the threatened one that is being attacked by the threatener to achieve the defined goals.

The subject of threat is divided into two main categories in terms of nature:

**A. Normative issues:** A mental aspect, including a part of the player's interests, which are defined in relation to his actual identity and structure.

**B. Applied issues:** They have an objective aspect and are observing the effectiveness of the political system.

The difference between the two is that the practical issues refer to issues such as interference, sabotage, exerting pressure and, at the highest level, invasion (war), which are commonly interpreted as “Hard Threats”. However, the normative issues are seen as the main focus of the soft threats (Eftekhari, 2012: 40-41). In this regard, the threats targeting the legitimacy of a political unit, culture, national identity, ideological values, public norms, social cohesion, loyalty, and national pride instead of its territorial integrity, are classified in the subset of soft threats (Bagheri, 2009: 52).

The features of this type of soft threats are as follows:

#### 2. The creeping nature of the soft threat

The creeping nature of the soft threat refers to the fact that the aggressive actor gradually and slowly implements his plans as one of the objectives of soft invasion is culture-making in the texture of the social strata of the target country and the institutionalization of culture is a time-consuming process. For the same reason, when a soft threat is institutionalized in the society, it cannot be controlled within a short time.

#### 3. The plurality of insecurity generators

Contrary to the hard threats where the governments mostly cause the insecurity, in the formation of soft threats, the sources of insecurity are diverse so that the governments, transnational institutions, terrorist groups, NGOs, parties, and the pressure groups can somehow create challenges for the establishment of the public order.

#### 4. Paying attention to the soft tool

The use of weapons in the hard war is one of the distinguishing factors between the soft and hard wars, while in the soft war, the role of tools such

as the Internet, satellite, cinema, text and video messages, cell phones, social networks, etc. are more prominent (Jamalzadeh, 2013: 144-145).

Since the threat is considered a contextual issue, and its conceptual and explicit recognition cannot be principally made without considering the social structure of the target community, thus, it seems necessary to review the upstream documents ruling the Iranian society, including the ideas and actions of the leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran, followed by review and analysis of the threats to the real structure of the Islamic Revolution accordingly. In this article, we explained these coordinates by exploring the views and approaches of Imam Khomeini and the Supreme Leader.

## **2. The Basics of Islamic Republic Identity**

Politics in the Islamic Republic of Iran is heavily influenced by the Politics of Identity, which is the politics that refers to a set of notions about the political community, which the domestic and foreign policy makers use it or inspire from it to create a sense of integrity and cohesion in order to legitimize public trust around the country's politics. This politics of identity can lead to the formation and institutionalization of political culture in two ways:

- 1.** It may be internalized in the cognitive framework of the society and expands.
- 2.** It may be accepted as a political reality in the society through the interpretations of policy makers and pursued by decision-makers and decision-takers.

Since domestic social norms and structures determine the choice of a particular identity and role of a country, thus, the social and semantic structures form the identities and interests of actors and countries through the three-fold mechanism of imagination or visualization, communication, and binding.

The identity of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as a political system objectified in the territory of Iran and resulted from the Islamic revolution that is taking the path of development, can be defined and determined in the framework of an identity square. Being Islamic, Iranian, revolutionary, and independent and fighting arrogance are the four sides of the Islamic Republic's identity square as a political system. However, these elements do not have the same weight in solidifying the identity of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Apparently, being Islamic has an increasing importance among these four elements so that one can claim that being Iranian, revolutionary, and independent are less important than being Islamic (Dehghani Firoozabadi, 2013: 51-61).

### **2-1. Shiite Islamism**

The Shiite Islamism is the most important intellectual and ideological structure that consolidates the national identity of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Islamism, based on the doctrines, teachings, and commands of the Shiite reading of Islam, considers the people of Iran the Muslim nation that Islam and Shi'ism are the most important source of their identity and loyalty. It is the Shiite Islam that distinguishes the nation of Iran from other nations and delineates the border between insiders and outsiders. Therefore, in the theory of the Islamic Republic based on the rule of the Faqih, which was introduced and implemented during the current of Islamic Revolution and with the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the basis of the political order during the Times of Occultation is the Velâyat-e Faqih (The Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist), which has led its legitimacy and acceptance based on the observance of Islamic rules and reliance on the votes of the Muslim nation. Hence, despite the idealistic readings of Imam Khomeini's political theory and the Islamic Republic's system, it should be noted that such a new order in the contemporary era is developed based on the Islamic realism or the very realist idealists. This perception and reading has given priority to the identity of "Shiite Islam" in the formation of the Islamic Republic and does not see it in contradiction and conflict with "being Iranian and Iranian nationality".

### **2-2. Iranian Nationalism**

This variable also plays an important role in a safe narrating of the behaviors and actions of the Islamic Republic of Iran and directly influences how the country decides in many cases. Along with a variety of liberal, ancient-oriented, anti-colonial and racist readings, the religious nationalism reading has shaped the national identity of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which emphasizes the role and place of the religion of Islam and the religion of Shiism in the development and formation of the nation and the national identity of Iran. Contrary to all the different readings of nationalism, this type of reading believes that there is no inherent conflict between nationality and religion, and consequently, between national and divine sovereignty; and beyond that, there is a genuine link between being Iranian and Islamic. In the area of thought, Imam and the supreme leader, despite the recognition of the nation as the level of analysis and socio-political reality, criticize the nationalism as an ideology and consider religious identity to be more important than national identity and redefine and regenerate it within the framework of Islam. In the view of the Imam, "being Islamic has established strong ties between the people of Iran more than being Iranians" (Mousavi

Khomeini, 2006, Vol. 4: 508). “We accept “nationality” in the light of the teachings of Islam... The nation is the people of Iran. For the Iranian nation, we do all kinds of sacrifices, but they are in the light of Islam” (Mousavi Khomeini, 2006, Vol. 10: 123-124).

In this kind of nationalism, “the national sovereignty”, however, in line with the divine rule, is considered as fundamental values and principles along with “independence”, “freedom of political action”, “non-intervention of foreigners in the internal affairs of Iran”, “freedom”, and the “equality”.

### **2-3. Non-dependence and fighting with arrogance**

Independence is a kind of international political discourse and semantic system, which has an anti-colonial, anti-arrogance, and anti-hegemonic nature. This intellectual structure is opposed to the current international political and economic order and situation and seeks to correct and modify it and achieve a desirable order and situation to provide the benefits and interests of developing countries and the South.

Hence, in the thoughts of the founders of the Islamic Republic, while respecting the observance of the rights of all human beings and non-interference in the internal affairs of countries in accordance with international law, defending the right and seeking justice for the oppressed and oppressed people of the world are considered as the duty of the Islamic state. In their view, the mission of the Islamic Republic is defined in defending the oppressed and fighting oppression not only at the national level but also globally and according to Imams statement, “We are advocates of all the oppressed people of the world, and fighting the oppression and defending the right are not limited to a particular geographic area” (Mousavi Khomeini, 2006: 32).

### **2-4. Being revolutionary**

The Islamic Revolution, as one of the elements of the identity of contemporary Iran, plays a key and crucial role in defining the construction of identity either in the individual domain or in the collective sphere of the Islamic Republic in a way that after more than three decades of the Islamic Revolution, the political structures of the country still use the extension of the “Revolution” and “being revolutionary” is the most important political value that depicts the boundary between being “insiders” and “outsiders”. This idea, which has emerged and manifested in the text and the introduction of the constitution of the Islamic Republic as well, is influenced by the Islamic Shiite culture. The most important elements leading to the revolutionized Shi’ a political culture include the principle of Imamate, waiting for the reappearance of Muhammad al-Mahdi, the occultation, belief



in the illegality of the ruling of non-infallibles and those not appointed by the infallible Imam, martyrdom, Taqiya, justice, and the principle of enjoining good and forbidding wrong. In other words, “the Shiite religion in Iran never lost its power of opposition and protest against the material and world powers, which is of its intrinsic qualities. The symbols of stability and resistance, tolerance of suffering, sacrifice, and rising for the truth and justice are manifested in various ritual performances of the Shi’ a and this religion has a significant capacity to enclose political conflicts in the religious forms. “The popular logic and a term such as “victory of the oppressed against the oppressors” and the promise of establishing social justice with the reappearance of the occulted Imam represent this religion so suitable for protesting and revolution” (A group of authors, 2006: 344). Along with these elements, the religious institutions such as Ashura, mourning, Tāzieh, and the tradition of remembering the martyrs should be mentioned in the Shiite culture, which have a high potential power in encouraging and mobilizing the people and breathing the spirit of fighting and becoming revolutionary.

In general, we should say that there are several and different identities in the Islamic Republic, “simultaneously” and “at the time”, which are objectified around a central value called the Islamic religion with the reading of pure Mohammadi Islam. Therefore, the protection of multiple identities is considered a part of the ontological security, threatening of which can be followed by Iran’s reactions.

### **3.Soft threats from the perspective of the leaders of the Islamic Republic**

It is deduced from the practical and theoretical aspects and methods of the Imam that he believed in the existence of two main constructs within the Islamic society, the two structures that, if are in good association with each other, a national security and discipline will be created (Eftekhari, 2000: 62). Imam says: “We did not want a verbally Islamic Republic; that we are constantly emphasizing the notion that as now the regime has become Islamic, the content should have also become an Islamic content is due to the fact, we are in a country claiming to be Muslim, its people claim that they are Muslims, but we see them not adhering to the teachings of Islam in numerous situations and cases... We did not want the verbally Islamic Republic. We called for the rule of God to be applied in our country and also in the rest of the country by the God’s willing” (Mousavi Khomeini, Vol. 8: 282).

The occurrence of any defect and insufficiency in this structure or any change in their relationship means disrupting the national order, which will lead to instability and, ultimately, insecurity. These two structures in the

viewpoint of the Supreme Leader a few months before the emergence of the “Sedition of 2009” were mentioned as the real and legal systems, based on which, the Islamic Republic of Iran system will survive:

“The Islamic Republic system has a legal and official structure, which includes the Constitution, the Islamic Consultative Assembly, the Islamic government, Elections (as you may know); protecting these is necessary and obligatory; but not enough. There is always a real structure, a true and real true identity within the legal identity; that must be preserved and protected. This legal structure is like the body; it acts as the format. That true identity is like the spirit; it is the meaning and content. If that meaning and theme changes, even if this apparent and legal structure survives, there will be no use and it will not last” (Statements by the Supreme Leader, December 14, 2008).

At the leadership's sight, the central construct is the same real structure and the surrounding structures are the legal structures, representing the economic, political, cultural, and military structures: “What is that internal structure? It includes the same ideals of the Islamic Republic: Justice, human dignity, preservation of values, trying to create brotherhood and equality, ethics, resistance against the enemy infiltration; these are the components of the real, intrinsic, and internal construct of the Islamic Republic System” (Statements by the Supreme Leader, December 14, 2008). The interpretations by Imam Khomeini and the Supreme Leader of the political system in Islam and the Islamic Republic faces two types of threats while implementing:

The first group are those threats that have targeted the efficiency and effectiveness of this system and somehow try to distort and diminish its ability. The enemies' measures to assassinate the key figures of the system in the early decades of the revolution and causing disturbance in the network of the constructive relationships between the structures and institutions can be interpreted as actions made in order to influence the system's efficiency. The majesty Imam Khomeini and the Supreme Leader have called such threats deviltry, wickedness, and non-rational measures, which represent their lower value compared to the second category of threats and suggest them as the hard aspect of the threat. “One of the issues that they are heavily pursuing is to take the public's trust in the efficiency of the system ... All of [their sayings] aim to make the same negative image of the Islamic system in the minds of the people to destroy the people's trust” (Statements by the Supreme Leader, May 12, 2003).

The second group are those threats that have targeted the true authenticity and identity of the political system. As a result of them, we see

the disregard of individuals for the main principles and rules of these institutions or the lack of commitment to the rules of communication governing them and, finally, the weakness of the rational-emotional relationship based on accepting and liking them. In the words of the Imam and the Supreme Leader, such threats interpreted as damages, defects, pests, calamity, etc., can be called “soft threats”. In such threats, the danger and threat can be found targeted at the religious human and his religious education; an issue, which weakening or deterioration will endanger the originality and basis of the Islamic politics. “They [the US] began their measures in the first ten years with the conspiracy of hard subversion –the imposed war and economic sanctions - but they could not do anything .... In the following period, they followed the soft subversion” (Khamenei, 2009: 61). ” In psychological warfare, the enemy seeks to destroy the spiritual bases” (Khamenei, 2011: 2).

Considering the philosophy of soft threats and the true structure of the political system in the thoughts of Imam Khomeini and the Supreme Leader, we can classify all types of soft threats into two groups of normative soft threats and applied soft threats based on the presented theoretical framework.

### **3-1. Normative soft threats from the perspective of the leaders of the Islamic Republic**

Since the religious values are considered as the guiding and basic instructions of thought and political action in the Islamic society, the occurrence of any damage in this area can lead to corruption in the structure of the ruling system. In this case, although the body and face of the political system looks good, but the system collapses from within. The Supreme Leader says in this regard: “This is a cultural raid that we can see it in various parts of the world; its intention, and its goal, is to empty and separate the revolution from its content, its Islamic and religious content, and its revolutionary spirit” (Khamenei, 2009: 45).

These types of soft threats target the idea of the political system, including:

#### **3-1-1. Normative soft threats targeting the Shiite Islamism**

##### **A. Non-monotheistic orientation**

Since the whole universe is subject to the power of God, the first area that can produce a soft threat is of the type of faith and belief; that is, if any policy and action deviates from the particular relationship of “From Allah” and “Toward Allah” and ultimately leads to arrogance and sensuality, it will be considered as a kind of soft threat to the Islamic political system. Obviously, due to the involvement of the Islamic system and the Islamic

pillars and principles, the emergence of any weakness and frailty in people's belief in these pillars and principles can mean a collapse from within and a very dangerous soft threat. The Supreme Leader says: "Today, the religion of Muslims is in danger by the enemy's cultural invasion and the promotion of corruption, oppression, and unbelief and promiscuity among Islamic societies... Today, the global arrogance has mobilized its scientific force and its people in order to likely conquer Islamic thought by thinking, culture, and means of knowledge" (Khamenei, 2009: 87). For this reason, the enemy tries to somehow disable this important focus of soft power in the Islamic Republic of Iran by creating despair and disappointment: "The goal of the enemy's cultural invasion is to change the minds of the people ... and to frustrate them from fighting. The man who writes .... "The Iranian nation has lost the world and the hereafter" ....Why? "Since, they fought the United States". "His purpose is to disappoint the people..." (Khamenei, 2009: 92). The result of such thinking is slogan of "Neither the Gaza nor the Lebanon", and the hesitating in actions that require the martyrdom spirit.

#### **B. The weakness of cultural origins of acceptance of the guardianship of the Islamic Jurist**

The guardianship is recognized in the Islamic discourse as an agent of gathering and accumulation of abilities. Hence, the occurrence of any damage or weakness in the guardianship or following the guardianship can lead to the weakening of power from within, which is the source of many soft threats: "Another important indicator of the political school of our Imam is the safeguarding of values that the Great Imam clarified its manifestation in explaining the issue of the guardianship of the Islamic Jurist... Velayat-e Faqih (the guardianship of the Islamic Jurist) is the place of engineering of the system and maintaining the orientation and direction and preventing the diversion to the left and right" (Khamenei, 2010-B: 126-127). "The affectionate relationship between the leader and the nation can resolve the problems in various fields. Therefore, most propaganda of the enemy is against the principle of the concept of the leadership of the Islamic Jurist, the guardianship of the Islamic Jurist, and the rule of the religionists... The enemy is targeting a leader to fight the revolution" (Khamenei, 2011: 17).

#### **C. Traditionalism and Secularism**

Despite various readings of secularism, in the epistemic realm of the Imam and the Supreme Leader, it means the tendency to build a perimeter on the independence of the central structure. This tendency may be accompanied by various justifications, such as the principle of specialization that emphasizes the issue of separating the religion from other conventional

contexts such as economics or politics; or the category of organizational order that focuses on the distinction between the function of the guardianship and other structures; or the subject of social change that supports the formation of modern societies that cannot accept the high level of supervision of religious institutions in specific areas. Such way of thinking would result in a situation that the central structure of the guardianship can play a ceremonial and formal role in relation to the perimeter structure. In the view of the Imam and the Supreme Leader, such a pattern of behavior is the realization of secularism. "This has been a devilish plan that has been planned since the time of Umayyad Caliphate and Abbasid Caliphate... and recently has become the East and West roads of the Islamic states, this issue has been highly raised that Islam is a personal issue between the man and God, and politics is separate from Islam" (Mousavi Khomeini, Vol. 16: 388). "Velayat-e Faqih is not a purely symbolic and ceremonial and perhaps even advisory issue - as some wanted and promoted this of the first years of the revolution [and] does not have a role of executive power in the government pillars; guarding and monitoring the overall movement of the system towards its ideal and excellent goals is the most important and the most fundamental role of the guardianship of the Islamic Jurist" (Supreme Leader's statement, June 3, 2004).

#### **D. Stagnation of the Political Ideology**

The Imams and the Supreme Leader's perception of jurisprudence as the trustee of human life dignity is from the beginning to the end. Thus, the function of the Islamic jurisprudence is more than just a simple ideology and it can be interpreted as the driving force of the political system. According to Imam Khomeini, "The jurisprudence is the real and complete theory of the administration of man and the society from cradle to grave" (Mousavi Khomeini, Vol. 21: 289). Obviously, the jurisprudence at such a position should be able to continue its political mission and dynamism with the mechanism of Ijtihad and the two elements of time and place. Otherwise, the jurisprudence stagnation and the vulnerability of ijtihad can provide a basis for political obstruction and, finally, the intellectual system fails to understand, analyze, and manage the changing affairs of the society. In the view of Imam, the bankruptcy of thought due to fundamentalism causes far more dangerous damages to the political system compared to the cultural indifference.

### **3-1-2. Normative soft threats against Iranian nationalism**

#### **A. Extreme nationalism**

With giving credibility to identity criteria such as language, race, history, etc., extreme nationalism causes a breakdown among the Islamic nation and activates its components to separate from this united body and turn into independent units. The damage caused by radical nationalism is the emergence of conflict and the prevalence of war, while Islam calls for the unity of the united nation and confirms geographical considerations at the level of “loving the motherland”:

“It is said in Islam that all races are equal. They are like the comb teeth. None of them have influence; Arab, Ajam, and Turk, none of them and no race have the superiority over the other.... We have repeatedly said... That Islam does not have such borders that are in other schools and manners“(Mousavi Khomeini, Vol. 14:24).

### **3-1-3. Normative soft threats against fighting arrogance and non-dependence**

#### **A. Westernization/Easternization**

The tendency toward Eastern and Western ideologies, either leading to replacement of Islam with the rival ideology or the re-reading of Islam in the form of those ideologies, is considered a soft threat in any case, which ultimately will target the identity and provoke the deterioration of the political system from within in this way. “Until this westernization and easternization exist in our country, there is no hope for the modification. We must first spend all our efforts to get ourselves out of this intellectual dependence... either the culture of west or the culture of east, all of which is the corruption. Its all for trapping us; to trap the human beings” (Mousavi Khomeini, Vol. 9: 516).

### **3-1-4. Normative soft threats against Revolutionism**

#### **A. Fundamentalism and pretending to piety**

Along with conventionalism, we can point to a dangerous trend called fundamentalism and pretending to piety that the soft threats resulting from them are so heavy and disastrous as such no threat similar to them has been evaluated so destructive. This also arises from the appearances and types of religious arguments and claims of this group who has more audiences in the religious communities.

The basis of this group is that Islam is so pure and sacred that should not enter into the realm of practical politics, and only with the reappearance of Muhammad al-Mahdi, we can take part in this field. Imam Khomeini, in

response to the threat of such thinking and thinkers, said: “The harm caused to Islam by these court Islamic clerks is worse than that of the damages caused by United States since they isolate Islam with an Islamic appearance and they [the Americans] cannot do anything like this” (Mousavi Khomeini, Vol. 18: 53). “Today, the Muslim community is such that the sham holy saints prevent the influence of Islam and Muslims and attack Islam in the name of Islam” (Mousavi Khomeini, Vol. 18: 269).

### **3-2. Applied soft threats from the perspective of the leaders of the Islamic Republic**

Islamic political system, due to relying on the flow of the guardianship of the Islamic Jurist has an effective mechanism for protecting the health of the system. Nevertheless, the operational dimensions and considerations of the system have been regarded at the same time and “efficacy” in meeting the current needs is also defined as a part of the constructive elements of the philosophy of the Islamic state. Accordingly, the main indicator of the government soft threats is the efficacy of the political system.

#### **3-2-1. Applied soft threats against the Shiite Islamism**

##### **A. The deterioration of the leader's characteristics**

The most important applied threat is the deterioration of the characteristics of the leader. A typical example of this threat can be seen in the succession of Imam and the problem of Mr. Montazeri. Despite the emphasis on his scientific aspect, Imam believed that he did not enjoy the special qualifications of the leadership of the Islamic system. Thus, Imam dethroned him with all certainty in order to prevent the dangers for the future of the political system. “Since it is made clear that you will deliver this beloved country and the Islamic revolution of the Muslim people of Iran after me to the liberals and from their channel to the hypocrites, you have lost the credibility and legitimacy of the future leadership of the system” (Mousavi Khomeini, Vol. 21: 330).

#### **3-2-2. Normative applied soft threats against Iranian nationalism**

##### **A. People's dissatisfaction and injustice**

The people's dissatisfaction and injustice, in the sense that lead to the erosion and destruction of social relations within the society and the loss of social capital, appear to be a dangerous threat to the social cohesion. The target of this soft threat is the “people's backing of power” and the thing is that the dissatisfaction and injustice will deprive the powers of the blessing of popular support. From this perspective, the Imam and the Supreme Leader, emphasizing the strategic slogan of “Neither will you harm nor will you be

harmed”, think of justice as a central axis of power that can guide it as well. The political system is bound to satisfy the people as the main benefactors. Thus, the Imam and the Supreme Leader consider any measure that reduces the people’s satisfaction a kind of damage to the country and the system. These soft threats target the people’s support for the system and are evaluated as dangers accordingly: “One of the issues that they are heavily pursuing is to destroy the public confidence in the efficiency of the system ... All of [their sayings] aim to make the same negative image of the Islamic system in the minds of the people to destroy the people’s trust” (Khamenei, 2009: 96).

### **3-2-3. Applied soft threats against fighting arrogance and non-dependence**

#### **A. Formation of the “dependence” and “inferiority complex” thought**

Although the management of national needs in the contemporary world is based on interaction and cooperation, but what should not be ignored in these collaborations is the principle of “independence”. That is, the cooperation and relationships should not be made at the expense of national independence and making the country dependent in different areas. The basis of dependency is that we can spend the oil revenues and employ the advanced achievements of other countries effortlessly and live by using the products manufactured by other countries. Such a thinking basically weakens the political system from inside and makes it powerless in the face of the slightest exertion of external pressures. “I am sure that the dear nation of Iran does not exchange a moment of its dignity with a thousand years of living in peace and blessings while depending on the foreigners and aliens“ (Mousavi Khomeini, Vol. 21: 201).

It is noteworthy that dependence in the thought of Imam and the Supreme leader does not have a merely economic aspect but includes the epistemic, anthropological, and ontological areas as well. One of the examples of this non-economic dependency is inferiority complex and inertia (lack of work and efforts), which produce weakness and provide the ground for the domination and victory of the enemies. “These have infused into the Iranian brains and Iranian beliefs over the years that “You cannot”; you have to follow the West. Do not let us believe in ourselves” (Khamenei, 2009: 26). “If a nation has no mobility by itself and wish and consider no future and value for itself, then, the enemies take action and manipulate its fate“ (Khamenei, 2011: 15).

### **3-2-4. Applied soft threats against the revolutionism**

#### **A. Indolence and social neglect**

Power in the political thought of Islam is of the category of “responsibility” and not “benefiting”. Therefore, the owners of power have more “duty” than



“interests”. From this perspective, Imam Khomeini and the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, in identifying the pathology of the political system, view seeking the luxurious life, as indolence, and distancing the principle of the simple life as a kind of soft threat to the future of the Islamic Revolution, which can lead to the destruction without shedding blood and war. For, indolence and desire for the accumulation of wealth leads to neglect of the people, which will first invalidate the political system of the religious realm, and secondly, will discourage and disappoint a great deal of its main supporters at critical and dangerous situations and times, which are mainly of the deprived classes, and according to Imam, “The Barefooted”. “May God prevent the day when our politics and the policy of our country’s politicians is to ignore defending the deprived ones... That day, when our government pay attention to the palace, on that day, we will lose the government and the people” (Mousavi Khomeini, Vol. 17: 376). The Islamic authorities should not live in a squandering and luxurious way. Beyond that, they should not live as such that living lavishly and luxuriously becomes a culture. This is the next point, which is more important than the first one, or is not less important at least... It turns into culture; in the sense that the rest look and learn...” (Statements by the Supreme Leader, December 15, 1996).

### **Conclusion**

In light of what was explained, we realized that the Islamic Revolution, by relying on its real structure, particularly the values of sacrifice, martyrdom, spirituality, belief in justice, righteousness, and seeking independence could restore the religious self-belief and Islamic awakening in the regional arena and influence the global relations meanwhile creating a cultural transformation at the domestic level and bring its software authority to the international arena. Thus, such a position includes potential threats in addition to the potential capacities at the same time. Obviously, the enemies of the revolution still dream of benefitting from it and constantly seek to prevent the survival and expansion of the values of the Islamic Revolution. This requires making efforts to modify and improve the cultural management in the country for a better utilization of the soft power in the process of the Islamic Revolution. This management should have features such as planning for the promotion of cultural policies, executing cultural policies explicitly and concertedly, coordination and consistency between cultural policies at the local, national, regional, and international levels as well as between governmental, non-governmental or quasi-governmental levels of the social and cultural institutions. In addition, the cultural management should enjoy optimal characteristics in the areas of tendencies

and trends, thoughts and knowledge, behaviors and functions, and insights and attitudes.

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